

PLEASE KEEP



ALLOTMENT & *Garden Guide*

VOL. 1 No. 9

SEPTEMBER - 1945

"O sweet September, thy first breezes bring
The dry leaf's rustle and the squirrel's laughter
The cool fresh air whence health and vigour spring
And promise of exceeding joy hereafter."

LIKE the squirrel, the gardener who has done his job well can indulge in a satisfied smile in September, when he surveys the fruits of his labours and decides on those "O.S." fruits and vegetables that will represent his household at the church or chapel harvest festival, tokens of his appreciation of the world-old partnership between Providence and man. Assuming the weather has not been too unkind and the pests not too troublesome, he can smile at the abundance that will be his squirrel's store for the late autumn and winter days that lie ahead. So it is natural that this issue of the Guide should be concerned mainly with harvesting and storing.



HARVESTING & STORING

THE "INSURANCE" CROP

In view of the potato shortage this year, we should take extra care in harvesting and storing our own crops so as to avoid any risk of loss. The

tops should be cut down and removed about a fortnight before lifting time—burn them if there is the slightest suspicion of blight. Choose a fine day for lifting, and leave the tubers on the ground

just long enough to dry—about four or five hours.

Be careful to sort your crop, to make sure that you don't store any diseased tubers. But even with the most careful sorting, a diseased tuber or two may accidentally get mixed with sound ones. So to prevent disease spreading, sprinkle powdered lime, or a mixture of lime and flowers of sulphur, among the tubers. The sulphur also helps to keep vermin away.

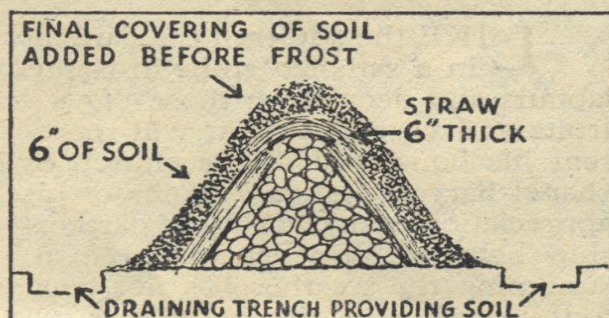
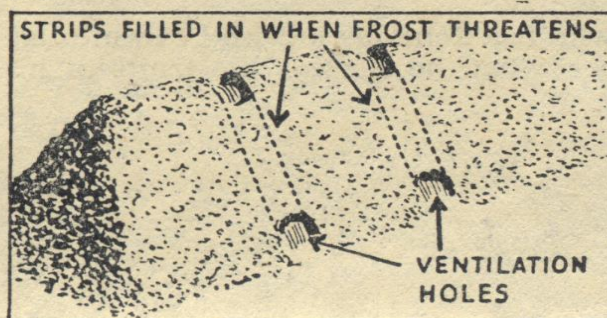
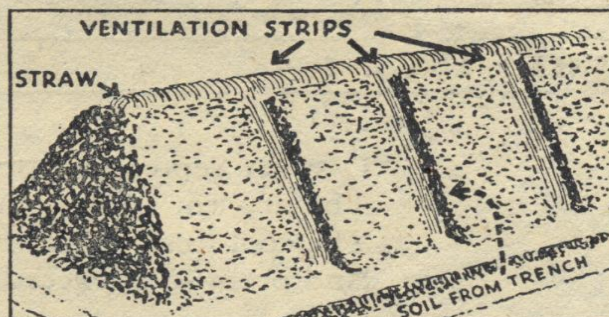
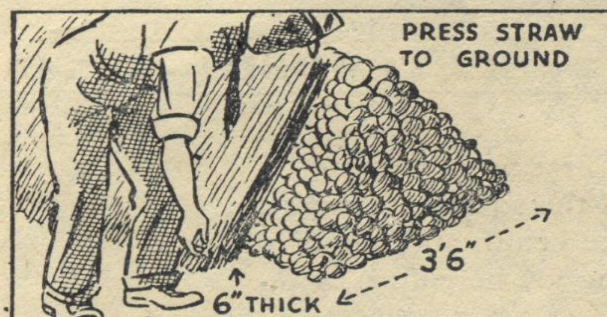
Potatoes are easily damaged by even a few degrees of frost, and are then unfit for human food. If you can,

stored potatoes fortnightly and remove any diseased tubers.

If you have a large crop and want to store them in a clamp or pie, this diagram may help you in building it.

Choose the driest bit of your land for your clamp and mark out a strip 3 ft. 6 in. wide and long enough to take your crop.

Don't be niggardly with the straw—provide at least a 6-in. layer. Press the lower ends of the straw close to the ground, for it is along the edge of the clamp that the frost generally creeps in. The straw layer should reach almost to the top of the



store your crops in boxes or barrels, rather than in sacks—and line the containers with old newspapers as a protection against frost. Put the boxes or barrels in a dry, frost-proof shed for the winter and cover them with old sacking, giving extra covering in severe weather.

Label your varieties and use the poorer keepers first; for instance, Arran Banner should be used before Arran Peak. Be careful about ventilation, particularly in the first months of storage; the door should be kept open, also the window when the weather permits. Look over your

potatoes. You then put a covering of straw over the top of the ridge, so that its ends overlap the straw at the sides. This ensures that the rain runs down the outside and not into the clamp. To keep the straw in place, put some soil along the lower edge and a spadeful here and there over the whole of the straw covering.

Allow a few days for "perspiring," and then cover most of the straw (to within 4 in. of the top of the ridge) with 6 in. of soil, leaving 6 in. strips bare every so often. To get this soil, dig a trench 1 ft. away from the base of the clamp, about 6 in. deep. Cut

an outlet in the trench to make sure that all water drains away.

When frost threatens fill in the bare strips with soil and also cover the ridge. But make ventilation holes at intervals at ground level and along the top of the ridge. Stuff these holes with straw to prevent them getting blocked with soil.

If your clamp seems to be all right, you may leave it undisturbed until February, if you like. But you should then open it when it is not freezing and inspect the contents, removing any diseased tubers and "sprouts." In remaking the clamp, take care not to bruise the potatoes, or rotting may set in.

***Harvesting* HARICOTS**

When the pods begin to turn brown, pull up the plants, tie them in bundles by the roots and hang them in a dry, open shed to ripen thor-

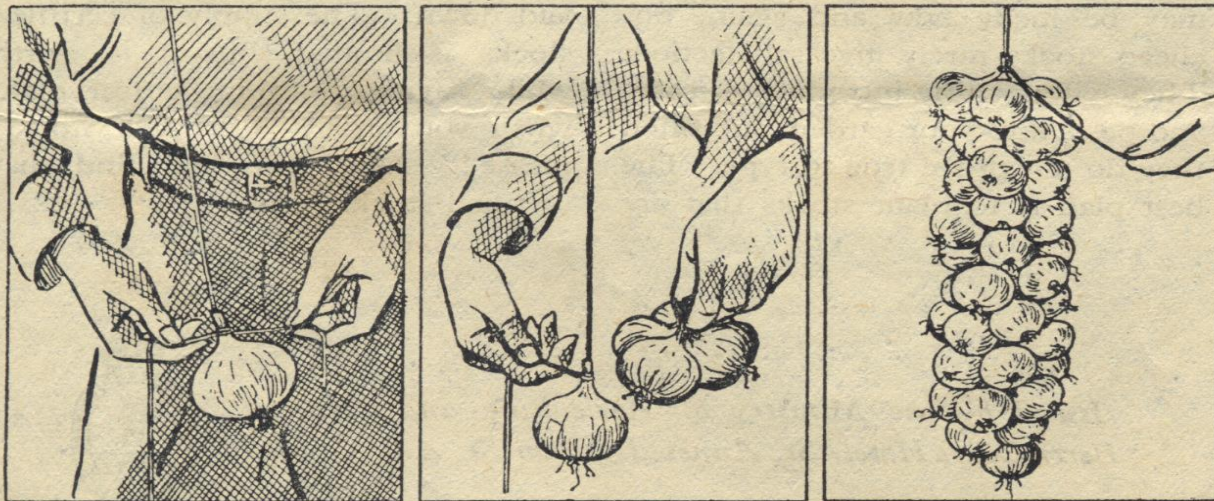
oughly. When quite dry, shell out the seeds and store them in boxes in a cold, frost-proof shed.

***Storing* ONIONS**

Last month's Guide dealt with ripening-off the onions. They must be thoroughly dry before storing. Onions keep best when the air can get at them freely, and the easiest way to make sure of this is to hang them up on ropes. This is a job you can do later on, when you can find the time. First remove all the roots loose skin and most of the tops. Then hang up a rope about 3 ft long, with a knot at the end, and tie a single good-sized onion to the end of it to serve as a base. For the rest of the rope, tie on four onions at a time. It is best to

the other you tie the tops to the rope by running the string round twice and finishing with a knot. Cut off the unwanted tops as you go along, but there's no need to cut the binding string. And so on up the rope, each bunch fitting snugly on top of the bunch beneath.

Some varieties of onions will not keep for long, for instance, Giant Rocca, Excelsior and Prizetaker—these should be used first. Ailsa Craig, Up-to-Date, Bedfordshire Champion and Southport Yellow Globe will last until Christmas, while



grade your onions : large onions on one rope and small onions on another. Arrange them round the rope and hold them with one hand, while with

varieties such as James's Long Keeping, Giant Zittau, Nuneham Park and Ebenezer will last until late winter and spring.

Harvesting MARROWS & PUMPKINS

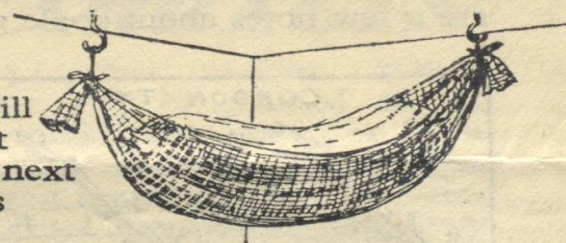
These may be stored for winter use as vegetables and for preserving. Only fully developed and ripened fruits should be set aside for storage, and they should be handled carefully to avoid bruising the skins.

Being very susceptible to low temperatures and easily damaged by frost, these fruits need a warm, dry atmosphere, such as that of a kitchen, bedroom or attic, to ensure successful storage. Cellars and outside sheds, and other damp places where the temperature is likely to fall below 45° F., are unsuitable. From 50 to 65° F. is the most suitable tempera-

ture for storage. The fruits may be placed in crates or boxes, or laid out singly on shelves, but they are best hung from the ceiling in nets.

Given this treatment, they can usually be relied upon to keep in good condition until January or February.

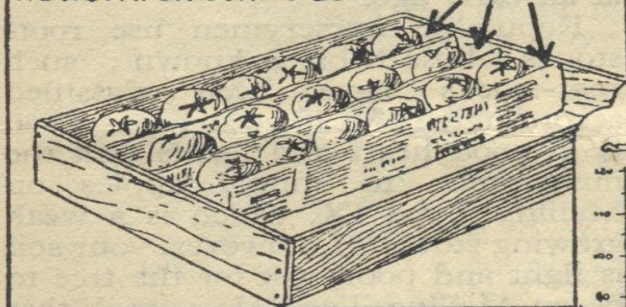
The harvesting of carrots, beet and certain other root crops will be dealt with in next month's Guide.



Storing TOMATOES

Mature tomatoes which are not ripened by the time the autumn frosts are coming on, may be stored separately in such receptacles as trays or box-lids, lined with a few layers of newspaper, which will help to make sure that the fruits remain where placed. Arrange the fruits in a single layer so that they do not touch one another. If there is any risk of touching, separate the rows by strips of

NEWSPAPER STRIPS BETWEEN ROWS



newspaper. Do not store any split, bruised or otherwise damaged fruits.

Put the trays or boxes in a room, cupboard or drawer, where the temperature is about 55° F. (not under 50° F. and preferably under 60° F.). A room where the temperature is liable to fall below 50° F. at night should, if possible, be avoided. A temperature above 60° F.

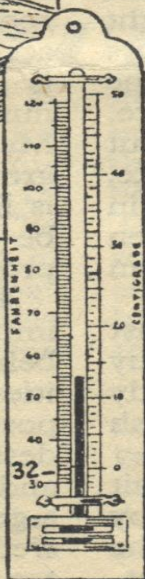
may cause the tomatoes to shrivel, but is otherwise less harmful.

Store the tomatoes in the dark; but if you wish to hasten the ripening of some fruits expose them to the light at a temperature of 60-65° F. Storage in the dark tends to prolong the period of storing, and so the period during which tomatoes are available may be appreciably extended.

Examine the fruits from time to time, and remove any that have ripened or any that begin to show signs of decay.

Storing tomatoes in peat or sawdust is not recommended. Sawdust sometimes imparts an unpleasant flavour, and both peat and sawdust are difficult to maintain at the right degree of dryness. It should be remembered that though very dry conditions may cause shrivelling, appreciable moisture favours the growth of moulds, which will develop quickly under the slight warmth that is otherwise conducive to the keeping of tomatoes. For this reason, storing in the moist warmth of the kitchen is inadvisable.

Green, immature fruits may be used for chutney and pickles.



Harvesting your own saved SEED

In the July Guide there was a section devoted to saving your own seed, and we promised that in a later issue we would tell you how to harvest it. The only "safe" vegetables for seed saving by the amateur are peas, beans, onions, leeks, tomatoes, lettuce, ridge cucumbers and marrows, so this note will be restricted to them.

PEAS AND BEANS

If only a pound or two of seed is being saved, leave the pods until nearly dry. The seed at this stage should be firm and tough; pressure with the finger nail should not easily cut the skin but only dent it.



TESTING SKIN OF BEAN FOR RIPENESS

To finish the drying, pick off the pods and spread them in a thin layer in a dry, airy place. When the seeds are quite hard, shell them from the pods and

store in cotton or paper bags.

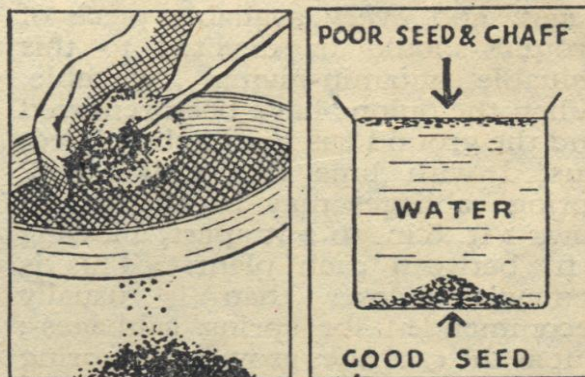
If your space is limited, the seeds may be shelled from the pods as soon as they are taken from the plant, and dried by spreading them in a thin layer on a tray. Move them each day so that they are all exposed to the air in turn.

ONIONS & LEEKS

Onion seed is usually fit to harvest by September, leeks in October. The seed should be black and doughy, not watery, before harvesting. If the stem below the head turns yellow, or some of the capsules burst open, the head is then certainly safe to cut. Cut off the heads with 12 in. or more of stem attached, and lay them in a sunny, airy place to dry. Place the onion heads in a bag since the dry seeds easily fall out.

Leeks take a long time to dry and the capsules remain tough. The easiest way to deal with very small quantities of leeks is to rub the heads on a fine sieve. If the threshed seeds and chaff are placed in water, the

good seeds will sink and the chaff and poor seeds will float. Do not let the seeds remain more than a few minutes in water; dry them immediately by spreading in a thin layer on a dish in an airy place.



TOMATOES

At least 10 lb. of tomatoes are required to produce 1 oz. of seed. Remove from the fruit the pulp containing the seeds and put it in a jar to ferment. After two or three days, tip it into a fine sieve and wash it vigorously under the tap; the pulp will wash away from the seeds, which may then be spread on muslin to dry.

LETTUCE

Keep close watch for the moment when the seed heads are ripe, since loss of seed results from shattering and from the ravages of birds. Inspect the plants at frequent intervals and pluck off any heads that show a "downy" formation. This usually appears within about a fortnight of flowering. Finish drying the heads on a tray under cover.

MARROWS AND RIDGE CUCUMBERS

Leave the fruit intended for seed

PARSLEY "TIP"

You may now find your spring-sown parsley running to seed, some of it in full flower. These flower stems will exhaust the plant. So your best

on the plant until it is fully ripe. The seed should be removed by hand, washed to remove the surrounding pulp and dried in the sun.

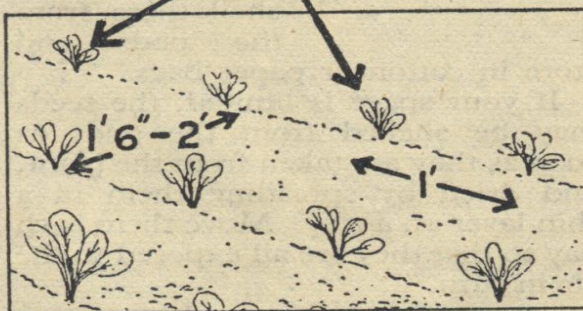
plan is to cut down the plants almost to ground level and give them a little fertiliser and some water. By this means you can have fine parsley all through the winter.

Those SPRING CABBAGES

Thinking about next year brings us to the need for adequate supplies of winter greens. September is the month for planting out spring cabbages, and every available piece of ground should be devoted to this valuable vitamin-giving vegetable. When the onions have been removed and the ground has been lightly hoed, dusted with lime and well raked, spring cabbages may be planted in rows 1 ft. 6 in. to 2 ft apart, allowing 1 ft. between each plant. This is somewhat closer than is usually recommended for spring cabbages; but as the cabbages grow in the spring each alternate plant may be cut and used as spring greens, leaving the remaining plants ample room to develop into fine-hearting specimens for cutting in May and early June. Any surplus seedlings remaining in the seed beds should be thinned out

to 2 or 3 in. apart, to form a reserve store that may be planted out on vacant ground next March or April, so providing a succession to those planted out this autumn. These later plants come into bearing when the main crop is finished and provide useful cabbages in early summer.

ALTERNATIVE PLANTS FOR
CUTTING AS SPRING GREENS



What about TURNIP TOPS?

At this time of the year, it is well worth while to sow a row or two of turnips, not with the idea of producing roots, but to get a supply of green tops for use next spring. The seeds should be sown very thinly in rows 1 ft. apart. When the seedlings appear, thin fairly lightly in the early stages, as the plants have to undergo

the winter and bad weather and pests may make inroads on them. Later on they may be thinned again, as the plants require more room to develop. The variety Green Top Stone is very suitable for sowing to produce a supply of tasty, green leaves that will be valuable as an extra green crop in the difficult month of April.

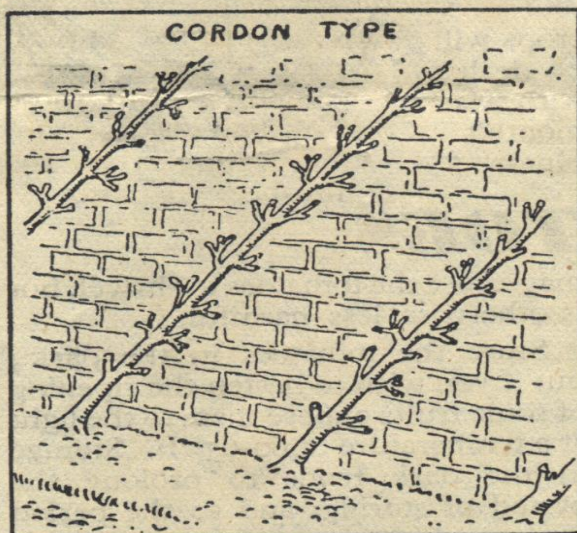
BEET "tip"

Look at a sample root or two in your beet rows. You may find that some are getting old and "ringy." If you sowed the seeds early in the year, it is quite possible that the beet are

ready for lifting and would be much better lifted now and stored in damp sand or soil in an odd corner outdoors. The main crop should still be growing well at the moment, but some earlier roots may go past their best if left in the ground any longer.

FRUIT from the GARDEN

The shortage of fruit during the war has led many people to turn their minds in the direction of growing their own, especially apples. They have grown vegetables successfully, and feel they can grow fruit, too. Why not, if they have got the necessary space for a tree or two and perhaps some bush fruit? So here are a few notes about apple growing.

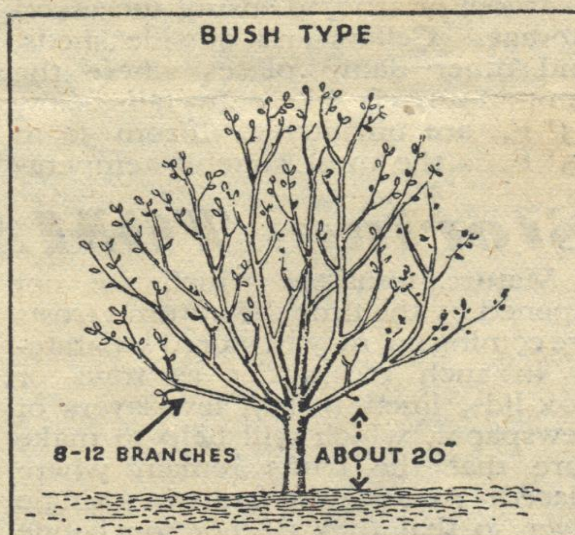


The aim should be to plant the compact, restricted type of tree that is easy to handle, gives a quick return and takes up very little space. So keep to the cordon type or the bush tree. The cordon has a single straight stem, furnished with fruiting spurs along its entire length. It is the type for planting against a wall or a fence. The bush tree has a stem of about 20 in. before branching takes place, and eight to twelve branches grow in the form of a cup, leaving an open centre. This form should be chosen when planting in the open garden.

A cordon tree should be at least two or three years old when you buy it, since a tree of this age will already be furnished with fruit buds. A bush tree should be about four years.

Be careful when you buy fruit trees. Apples are propagated by budding or grafting scions of the selected variety on special root-stocks. It is important that you

should know this, for the root-stock has a marked influence on the growth of the tree, and so on the age at which it will start to bear. If the root-stock is vigorous, growth will also be vigorous, you will have to do much pruning and fruit-bearing will be delayed; if, on the other hand, the tree has been propagated on a weaker growing root-stock, such as



Type IX, growth will be less strong and the tree will come into bearing at an early age.

Reputable nurserymen use root-stocks whose habit is known; such root-stocks have been classified accordingly. So if your garden soil is in good heart and fertile, ask the nurseryman to supply apples on Malling Type IX, which is a weak growing stock. If, however, your soil is light and poor, ask for the tree to be on Malling Type II, a stock that produces a tree of medium vigour.

The choice of variety is also important, for any particular variety behaves differently in different localities. For instance, Cox's Orange—possibly the most famous English dessert apple—does best in the south and in areas of low rainfall. It is not a good variety for planting in cold or wet districts. People's tastes differ, too. The small gardener would do well to take the advice of his County

Horticultural Superintendent or his local horticultural society about suitable varieties for local conditions. Here is a list of a few well-known varieties that can generally be relied on to do well in most districts, though some may not suit every condition throughout the country.

<i>Dessert apples</i>	<i>Cooking apples</i>
James Grieve	*Rev. W. Wilks
*Ellison's Orange	Lord Derby
Allington Pippin	Lane's Prince Albert
Laxton's Superb	*Crawley Beauty

The varieties marked with a * are self-fertile, and Crawley Beauty flowers very late, so being specially

suited to districts subject to late frosts. If there is room for only one apple tree choose a self-fertile variety. Where two or more varieties are to be grown, select those that flower about the same time.

Planting operations will be dealt with in a later Guide.

If you would like more information than can be supplied in this Guide about how to increase fruit production in the garden, you would find the Ministry's bulletin "Fruit from the Garden" very helpful. You can get it for 3d. (4d. post free), either through any bookseller, or direct from H.M. Stationery Office, York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Plant Certified Stocks

Good planting stock costs very little more than rubbish and in the long run it will prove *less* costly. Many of you will have been disappointed with the crops produced by those fruit bushes and plants that you have picked up cheap. You may be lucky now and again, but cheap stocks rarely give satisfaction. They will possibly introduce diseases and pests into your garden, and often they do not prove true to type. The best plan is to plant stocks that are

certified true to variety and substantially free from pests and diseases.

Every season the Ministry of Agriculture examines stocks of strawberry plants and blackcurrant bushes, and issues certificates for those stocks that attain the standards laid down. The supply of certified stocks is limited, but it is worth while saying to your nurseryman, when you order, "Certified Stocks, please!" And you will find that certified stocks please.

*Issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries,
Berri Court Hotel, St. Annes, Lytham St. Annes Lancs.*

